

FARE-FREE TRANSIT FOR SACRAMENTO YOUTH

The City of Sacramento has an opportunity to implement a high-impact, strategic policy that changes one of the major systems upon which youth rely: public transportation. There are a myriad of examples when young people have stated that transportation is one of the biggest barriers they face in getting to and from school, internships, and other enrichment activities.

Proposed Initiative. This proposal seeks to implement fare-free transportation for Sacramento's young people through a partnership with Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT). There are several reasons to implement this initiative for youth living or attending school in Sacramento: increasing equity across neighborhoods, boosting ridership, developing lifelong transit riders, reducing greenhouse gases, freeing up resources at RT usually going towards enforcement, increasing school attendance leading to better outcomes for youth and additional resources for school districts.

Design. The design of the policy's implementation will include the following:

- **Eligibility** – This initiative will provide fare-free transit to youth in grades K-12 who live or attend school within the City of Sacramento.
- **Enactment** – This initiative will provide for universal access (all day, any day of the week, all year, any SacRT transit line) to fare-free transit.
- **Access** – Partnerships with local districts to distribute through schools will provide the access for the greatest number of eligible youth.

Implementation. To implement the program, stickers are attached to youth's student ID.

Evaluation. Researchers at University of Texas, Austin who recently completed a study with three SCUSD schools to assess the barriers students face in traveling to school and other activities, have tentatively agreed to conducting a study on the impact of fare-free transportation on these students' lives in areas including, but not limited to, school attendance, engagement in out-of-school time enrichment activities, participation in work-based learning, and attitudes towards SacRT in general.

Timing. The initiative can launch in August 2019 assuming City Council approves the funding request.

Cost. SacRT estimates that, in the first year of the initiative, student ridership is estimated to be 40,000 (an increase of 600%). SacRT will be able to absorb the increased ridership without additional costs. The

City of Sacramento will commit \$1 million from the General Fund to support the initiative. In addition, the cost of the evaluation is estimated to be \$80,000.